



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20318-9999

2009 Memorial Day

On Memorial Day, and every day, we honor Americans who volunteer to serve a cause greater than themselves – Americans just like Phillip Myers.

Growing up in Hopewell, Virginia, Phillip was, some say, just “like any other teenager.” He went to school, loved cars and music, and for a few years after high school, he held a job near home. Phillip joined the Air Force in 1999 as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician because, as he once half-joked, “it paid more.” But everyone around him knew differently – he was merely following his dreams.

Spending all ten years of his service overseas, including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, his father said Phillip always looked out for the people serving under him, and that “if he thought a job was too dangerous, he’d get out and check it himself.” He had previously received both the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star for valor, but Phillip wasn’t motivated by accolades. He knew he was just looking out for his people, and trying to get the job done.

On April 4th, 2009, near Helmand Province in Afghanistan, Technical Sergeant Phillip Myers died doing what he loved to do – protecting the lives of others – while disarming an improvised explosive device.

It was nearly 65 years ago when Ernie Pyle, the famous wartime reporter, captured a similar spirit of seemingly ordinary young men, extraordinarily fighting and dying on the beaches of Normandy: they were “fighting for each other.” We are reminded that the story of Phillip Myers is a special but timeless one – the story of Americans simply doing what they love, on behalf of those they care for most.

Memorial Day is about families and friends, bound by service, commitment, and sacrifice. As you gather this holiday weekend with those you love, please remember Phillip’s family, his wife, daughter, and son, and thousands of other families of the fallen, just like them – for whom this day will be forever sacred.

On behalf of the more than two million Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coastguardsmen, and their families, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I wish you a very enjoyable and safe Memorial Day.

Sincerely,

M. G. MULLEN
Admiral, U.S. Navy